Field Notes
May 4, 2007
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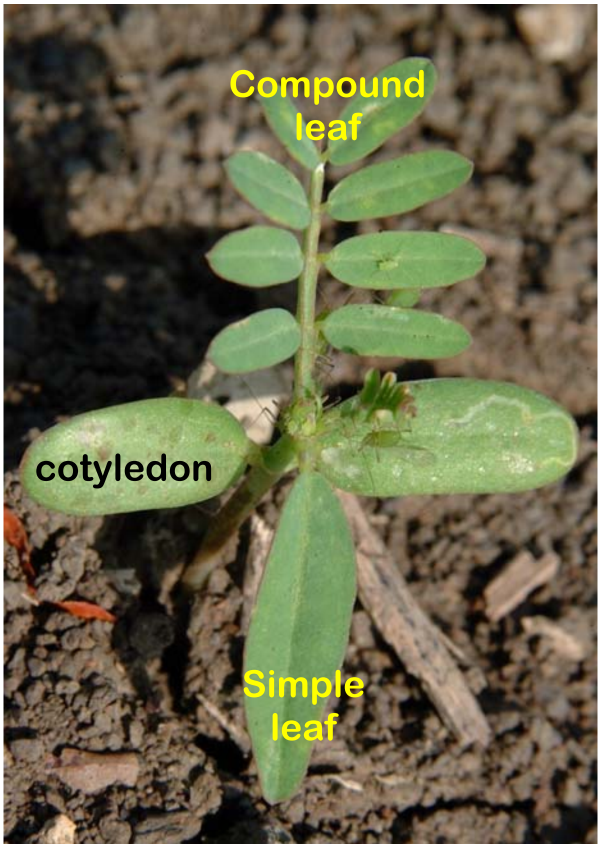
On the previous page are a series of three photographs illustrating blackbird damage to planted rice. This field was water seeded with dry seed. The last pass had been a cultipacker that left shallow grooves so some of the seed were covered with the heavy clay soil, but most seed were exposed. The first photograph shows the typical damage seen in heavy clay soils once they begin to dry. The birds have learned to flip over the peds and get to the seed. Unlike ducks, blackbirds hull out the seed to get to the endosperm. Ducks eat the entire seed. Contrary to a popular myth rice will not cause the birds stomachs to explode if they eat raw rice. Millions of ducks and blackbirds have proven that. In fact, a friend who raises exotic birds feeds one type rough rice when he wants them to breed. Throw all you want at weddings. At these prices it sure does not cost much.

The photograph above and the first one on the next page are presented here for two reasons. First, it shows an apparent nutrient deficiency. I really do not know if it is nutrient deficiency, but if it is a nutrient deficiency the nutrient is **immobile** in the plant because the symptoms are greatest on the youngest leaves. Mobile elements like nitrogen exhibit deficiency symptoms in the lower, older leaves first. This is a result of the plant moving the element to the area in greatest need, the rapidly growing new parts.

The second reason is more evident in the next photograph. This is occurring in plots on the experiment station. Remember I said I do not know what is causing it. For some of you it might offer some consolation to know researchers have problems like farmers have problems and we cannot always figure them out. We also have heavy rice water weevil pressure too.


In an earlier Field Notes I showed a photograph of the heavy alligatorweed and roundleaf mud plantain pressure in one of our verification fields and said I would let you know what we used and how well it worked. We used a mixture of Londax and Regiment. Even though these herbicides are similar chemically for some reason they are synergistic. I have not tried Grasp and Londax, but they could also work together too.

The combination can be pretty tough on rice too. It banged it up pretty in this field. We are holding the water with hope the rice will come on out of it. Had we not controlled these weeds it would have been worse anyway so we were not taking a big chance. Activity on the roundleaf mud plantain is not as dramatic. Notice in the background of the second photograph is a better looking paddy.



Above are photographs of an occasional (but increasing) weed in rice fields and the other a regular problem. The occasional pest is pigweed. Because it is not often found in rice fields little is known of the activity of rice herbicides on this weed. I do know that I have tried Facet and Londax without success.

The weed to the right is Sesbania. It is important to note the simple first leaf and compound second leaf separate it from jointvetch which has a compound first leaf. That can be critical when you are trying to select an appropriate herbicide.

Above is an example of why sprangletop can be so difficult to detect and control post emergent. In our verification program we have used both Command and Prowl with success. We have had much less success with more expensive post emergent herbicides. The object in the left of the photograph is a lead pencil. The lead is 0.5 mm (about 1/64 inch) in diameter. The plant was less than a half inch tall; hard to find and hard to spray.